

Appl. No. 09/847,795
Amdt. dated January 19, 2005
Reply to Office Action of November 4, 2004

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Please cancel claim 2 without prejudice. Please amend claims 1, 3, 16, and 21 as follows:

1. (currently amended): A combined electronic price label (EPL) and electronic sign (ES) system comprising:
 - an electronic sign (ES) for displaying a promotional message;
 - a plurality of EPLs;
 - a promotional data file;
 - a price lookup (PLU) file; and
 - ~~a common~~ host computer ~~for~~ reading an EPL/ES data file which is separate from the PLU file to determine ~~if whether~~ an identification number stored in the EPL/ES data file is a promotion identification number associated with the ES or an item identification number associated with an EPL, said host computer reading the promotional message corresponding to the promotion identification number from the promotional data file and operating to sending a message to the ES which includes a command for the ES to display the promotional message ~~if the identification number is associated with the ES, and operating to send a message to the EPL if the identification number is associated with the EPL.~~

2. (canceled)

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3. (currently amended): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 further comprising ~~wherein the~~ promotional data file ~~that~~ further includes a plurality of promotional messages, and wherein the host computer utilizes the identification number to provide an index to select one of the plurality of promotional messages from the promotional data file for transmission to the ES.

4. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the message to the EPL includes a command for the EPL to display a price if the identification number is associated with the EPL.

5. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ESL system of claim 1 wherein the identification number:

provides a message offset pointer indicating a location of the promotional message, if the identification number is associated with the ES, and

provides a price offset pointer indicating a location of a price displayed by the EPL, if the identification number is associated with the EPL.

6. (canceled)

7. (canceled)

8. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the promotional message is associated with an offer.

9. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 8 wherein the offer applies to a family of items which are not associated with a single PLU number.

10. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the promotional message includes bundled price information associated with an offer.

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11. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the ES displays a default message when the ES is not displaying the promotional message.

12. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the message sent to the ES includes a time period for which the promotional message is to be displayed.

13. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the ES displays a default message after the time period has expired.

14. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 13 wherein the ES displays the default message before the message is received.

15. (previously presented): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein the promotional message includes a frequent buyer price.

16. (currently amended): A method of displaying a promotional message by a combined electronic price label (EPL) and electronic sign (ES) system comprising the steps of:

- (a) reading a record associated with an EPL or an ES from a combined EPL/ES data file separate from a price lookup (PLU) file;
- (b) determining if the record is associated with the EPL or the ES;
- (c) reading a promotional data file to determine the promotional message, if the record is associated with the ES;
- (d) sending a promotional display message to the ES; and
- (e) displaying the promotional message by the ES.

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17. (original): The method of claim 16 wherein step (b) utilizes a flag which indicates if the record is associated with an EPL or an ES.

18. (original): The method of claim 16 further comprising, before step (a), the step of:
displaying a default promotional message by the ES.

19. (original): The method of claim 16 wherein the promotional display message includes a time period for which the promotional message is to be displayed.

20. (original): The method of claim 19 further comprising the step of:

(f) displaying a default promotional message after the time period has elapsed.

21. (currently amended): The combined EPL and ES system of claim 1 wherein if the identification number is associated with the EPL, then the ~~common~~ host computer looks up a price for the EPL in the PLU and sends a message to the EPL.